

**Independent Expert Review on the self-Assessment Process of
Nicaragua's R-Package**

September 2017

1. Objective

The following Report has been prepared to present the consultant's review of the Self Assessment Process of Nicaragua's R-Package, performed during March 2017 through a participatory multi-stakeholder consultation. The review also assesses REDD+ readiness progress and remaining challenges to be addressed to achieve REDD+ readiness.

2. Methodological Approach.

This section presents the scope of the work performed by the TAP, as per the following Terms of Reference:

- To perform a desk-review of Nicaragua's R-Package.
- To perform an independent review of Nicaragua's progress in REDD+ readiness, using FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines.
- To review Nicaragua's documentation of stakeholders' self-assessment, including the process and outcome.
- To review key outputs referred in the R-Package, including the national REDD+ strategy, the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), the Reference Emissions Level and forest monitoring, and national institutional structures.
- To provide constructive and targeted feedback, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in the subcomponents

As a main deliverable, this Report, according to the TOR, must address:

- Self-assessment process and documentation submitted by Nicaragua, and
- Progress on REDD+ readiness with emphasis on strengths and weaknesses of each subcomponent as per the TAP perception (without judging the content of the self-assessment report).

To carry out the required tasks, the following methodological approach will be followed:

- Task 1: Review self-assessment process and documentation, based on Nicaragua's R-Readiness package produced by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources MARENA.
- Task 2: Review progress on REDD+ readiness based on the submitted reports and background documents and information.

The consultant's review did not intend to interpret or evaluate the country's self-assessment, which is based on a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process guided by FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework Guidelines. The review focuses on the process and approach while performing the self-assessment, and provides feedback to the FCPF Participants Committee (PC).

Nicaragua has prepared a R-Package Report, where the self-assessment is carried out by qualitatively scoring 34 performance indicators associated to the Components and Sub-components shown in Table 2 (Page 4). The Report presents the information gathered for the Self-Assessment Process

(Section II), which integrates Nicaragua's progress with relation to each of the R-Readiness Components and Sub-Components.

3. Review of Self-Assessment Process and Documentation

3.1 The ENDE-REDD+ process in Nicaragua

The REDD+ readiness process in Nicaragua can be divided into three stages. The first stage covers the period from 2008-2012, the second the years 2013-2014, and the current stage runs from 2014 to 2017. This evaluation report is built around the development of the current stage.

Historically the three stages are:

- a. **First stage** (2008-2012). In 2008 the REDD+ Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) was prepared in order to place REDD+ on the government's agenda and begin work with FCPF. The R-PIN included three key aspects: (1) a preliminary evaluation of the patterns and causes of deforestation; (2) a revision of the consultation process to verify the appropriate development of the National Avoided Deforestation Programme (ENDE-REDD+) and (3) potential institutional arrangements for implementing the mechanism in the country.
- b. **Second stage** (2013-2014). This consisted mainly of the process of making administrative and fiduciary arrangements. A four-year legal agreement was reached between MARENA and the World Bank, which was signed in December 2013 and expires on 31 October 2017.
- c. **Third stage** (2015-2017). In 2015, MARENA designed the Emissions Reduction Programme Idea Note (ER-PIN), in which it proposed to the FCPF Carbon Fund an area of coverage to include both autonomous regions on the Caribbean Coast, the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio-Maíz Biological Reserve. This ER-PIN was submitted to the World Bank on 11 March 2017.

3.2 ENDE-REDD+ highlights in Nicaragua

During the first year of the grant (2014), implementation of ENDE-REDD+ readiness in Nicaragua involved setting up the Project Implementation Unit (PIU). This took longer than expected, but finally it was set up properly. Other important milestone was reached in 2015, with the design of the Emissions Reduction Program Idea Note (ER-PIN) and its acceptance by FCPF.

There were three important strategic challenges in the design of ENDE-REDD+:

1. The first is achieving inter-sectoral coordination between the ministries of agriculture, the environment and energy.
2. The second challenge is the strengthening of inter-sectoral coordination in order to tackle the problems of deforestation and forest degradation, which are rooted in many different sectors.

3. And, third the challenge of implementing multi-sectoral coordination.

3.3 Organization contributing to the ENDE-REDD+ process in Nicaragua

Several organizations have contributed to the Nicaragua's readiness process. MARENA, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, estimated the cost of the program as US\$11 million. However, to date only FCPF has contributed directly to the ENDE-REDD+ budget. Notwithstanding the foregoing, other partners are making substantial contributions to this process. There follows a summary of the contribution made by partners in both phases.

1. The Inter-American Development Bank and Swedish Development Cooperation are carrying out a Project (2015-19) that applies environmental compensation incentives and mechanisms intended to promote the protection of water, forest and biodiversity resources for US\$ 449,600.
2. With GEF funds the government is supporting forest regeneration in twelve protected areas (parks) and biological corridors in the Pacific, Central and Northern regions of Nicaragua.
3. GIZ supported a Project aimed at indigenous populations, the goal of which was to promote agroforestry systems for US\$ 700,000. The most recent of these projects is the Timber Value Chain (CAVAMA), a multi-sectoral, nationwide Project that consists of providing incentives for forest restoration for US\$ 24 million in € (Euro) terms.

3.4 Self-evaluation of the REDD+ readiness process

The Nicaragua R-Package Report contains the self-evaluation of the REDD+ readiness package based on the "Guide to the FCPF Readiness Evaluation Framework", which is national in scope and consists of the following:

- A summary of the REDD+ readiness process;
- A report on the process of self-evaluation by the many stakeholders involved;
- The results of the nationwide self-evaluation by the many stakeholders involved;
- An examination of the nationwide self-evaluation by the many stakeholders involved;
- References and specific outputs of the readiness process: REDD+ strategy, MGAS, emissions reference level, national reporting and verification system, among others.

On 28 February 2017, MARENA held the Self-Evaluation Workshop on the REDD+ readiness process, with the participation of many actors and stakeholders. Eighty persons participated in this workshop, but more specifically including those of the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions and representatives of the Indigenous Territorial Governments in the Caribbean, Pacific, Central and Northern regions. The R-Package Reports describes in deep details the methodology and results of the self-evaluation process. This evaluation report refers to the progress made in the readiness process of the National Avoided Deforestation Programme ENDE-REDD+.

The R-Package refers to four (4) Components which are blended with their corresponding Sub-components which in total comprise 9 nine different issues and 34 indicators.

Component 1. Organization and Consultations for Readiness

The organisation and coordination of the inter-institutional and multi-sectoral readiness process has enjoyed support and political will at the highest level. Through SPPN in Nicaragua, The National Government of Unity and Reconciliation (GRUN for its Spanish acronym) has provided institutional support to MARENA, which has the mandate to lead the REDD+ readiness process, accompanied by other ministries and institutions such as the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP), the National Institution of Territorial Studies (INETER), and the National Forest Institution (INAFOR), the Northern and Southern Caribbean Coast Regional Governments autonomous regional governments and the Indigenous and Afro-descendant Territorial Governments. All these organizations participated in the self-assessment workshop and have expressed their ideas, which have been recorded and are described in the present evaluation.

Component 2. ENDE-REDD+ Program Readiness

Nicaragua has completed three studies that are key to the design of an ENDE-REDD+ strategy, as follows: *Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation at National and Regional Levels; Legal Framework and Public Policies*; and a *Land and Natural Resources tenure study.*, which the latter concentrates on the autonomous regions on the Caribbean Coast, the Alto Wangki Bocay and Río San Juan.

Component 3. Forest emissions reference level / Forest reference level

The main steps forward have been the preliminary development of a Reference Level (NREF/NRF) for the 2005-2015 period and the development of a process intended to strengthen capacities on issues related to the Reference Level. This was done through inter-institutional technical workshops and regional teams during 2015-2016. In the first phase of readiness the technical guidelines in support of NREF were consolidated. The determination of the Reference Level is a key and sensitive issue that requires sound statistics, measurements or data. In the Forest Reference Emissions Levels determination, the most recent forest map date back to 2001. It would be advisable to update these maps with latest technology in order to produce consistent output with the detailed methodology produced and used in the validation of the soil use maps of Nicaragua

Component 4. Forest Monitoring System and Information and Information on Safeguards

The design of the Monitoring System and its subsystems was concluded (forests, joint benefits, safeguards). The MRV technical workshop at the national level has validated these. Institutional roles were defined and methods were explored to include an early warning system and institute community monitoring.

Three evaluations were made of Nicaragua's Readiness progress: Mid-Term Report evaluation carried out on August 2016; the second was performed on June 2017, and the third one, made just before submission what was termed Self-evaluation by actors on 28 Feb 2017.

4. Assessment by the TAP: Participatory self-assessment

Each indicator was evaluated by two groups of stakeholders as shown in Figure 2. There are two different groups: ethnic and focus or working groups. In the description of the assessment of each indicator the final evaluation is based in the voting by participants in each of the groups.

FIGURE 2. THE PARTICIPATING GROUPS: ETHNIC & WORKING GROUPS

Ethnic group				Members of working group			
Mestizos	Miskitos	Crole	Ulwas	South Caribbean Autonomous Regional Council	Ministry of the Environ. & Nat. Res. technicians	Natural Resources Secretariat (RACCN/ RACCS)	Ministry of Family, Community, Cooperative & Associative Economy

The columns that refer to ethnic origin are shown only in a descriptive manner, simply to document what ethnic group they belong to.

In Table 3 the participating institutions from the Public and Private Sector are introduced, as institution is presented along with its acronym, which will be consistently used along the assessment. It worth pointing out the only genuinely private institutions are the Reforestation companies. In my opinion this is a voice of alert to the participation of private companies and entrepreneurs who own the land and that might be responsible either for proper management, for sustainable reasons or compelling mechanisms as the Standard of Best Management Practices, or for the deforestation for the advancement of the agricultural lands.

TABLE 3. PARTICIPANTS AT THE NATIONAL SELF-EVALUATION WORKSHOP ON THE REDD+ READINESS PROCESS

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	Non-government and PRIVATE ENTITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Family, Community, Cooperative and Associative Economy (MEFCCA) - Natural Resources Secretariat SERENA – Autonomous Regions (RACC) - South Caribbean Autonomous Regional Council (CRACC) - Government of the South Caribbean Autonomous Region (GRACC) - National Environmental Information System (SINIA) / SIMIAR - Regional Technicians - Nicaraguas Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions University - Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense (URACCAN) - Indigenous Territorial Government (GTI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reforestation companies - National Cattle and Livestock Commission (CONAGAN) - Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific, Central and Northern Regions of Nicaragua (PI-PCN)

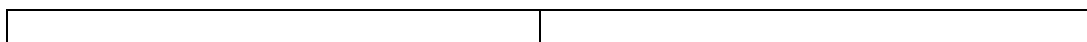


FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL SCORE TABLE FOR THE ASSESSMENT

No progress shown as yet	More development needed	Good progress but needs to be developed further	Considerable progress made
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TABLE 1 . SUMMARY OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT BY COMPONENT

REDD READINESS COMPONENT AND SUB-COMPONENT	PROGRESS INDICATOR
Component 1. Readiness Organization and Consultation	
Sub-component 1a	
Sub-component 1b	
Component 2 REDD+ Strategy Preparation	
Sub-component 2a Assessment of land use, Land use changers, Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	
Sub-component 2b REDD+ Strategy Options	
Sub-component 2c Implementation Framework	
Sub-component 2d Social and Environmental Impacts	
Component 3 Reference Emissions Level/ Reference Levels	
Component 4 Monitoring systems for Forests and Safeguards	
Sub-component 4a National Forest Monitoring System	
Sub-component 4b Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance and Safeguards	

5 Assessment by the TAP: Progress towards REDD+ Readiness

COMPONENT 1. READINESS ORGANIZATION AND CONSULTATIONS

Sub-component 1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements (Criteria 1-6, Yellow)

- 1) Accountability and transparency
- 2) Operating mandate and budget
- 3) Multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration
- 4) Technical supervision capacity
- 5) Funds management capacity
- 6) Feedback and grievance redress mechanism

1. In terms of the management of REDD+, the proposed institutional and management arrangements are well described and appear straightforward. The description of the national entities that will manage the REDD+ are clear.
2. Criterion 2 on operating mandates and budget has been well described in the R-Package. Participants are pleased with the outcome of the operational mandate but they have expressed some concern about budgeting, which they estimate is limited.
3. Regarding Criterion on multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration, in general terms there is a satisfactory evaluation. Although, indigenous people have expressed that they feel it could be broader. Cross section collaboration between national entities has appeared occasionally to be somewhat limited and could be improved.
4. The self-assessment by Nicaragua has observed that technical supervisory capacity for REDD+ still need to be strengthened. The TAP suggests that this, together with Criterion 3, are issues that can be addressed in the strategy. Although, external consultants in the readiness process were capable and experimented, it was felt that they could have contributed to build capacity in their government counterparts. Nicaragua still needs technical cooperation and assistance in capacity building especially among the indigenous participants.
5. There is a generalized feeling that funding has been effective and transparent, many participants, particularly indigenous people think that funding should be expanded in order especially to capacity building.
6. At the Self-Evaluation Workshop indigenous leaders made it clear that while they have been involved from the outset of the REDD+ readiness process, they feel the consultation processes could be broader yet or take place in the communities.

1b. Consultation, Participation, and Outreach (Criteria 7-10, Yellow)

- 7) Participation and engagement of key stakeholders
- 8) Consultation processes
- 9) Information sharing and accessibility of information
- 10) Implementation and public disclosure of consultation outcomes

7. Participation of key stakeholders has been very successful, main stakeholders responsible for deforestation have committed themselves to do their most in achieving a success out of the REDD+ program. The only group that has been somewhat reluctant, have been the palm oil producers.
8. Regarding the Consultation Process working group determined that there was considerable progress. This was not the case for Regional Technicians and Indigenous Territorial Government along with the Creoles.
9. This indicator shows in general terms some progress, although it is recognized that it is still required increased dissemination of performed activities.

10. This indicator proves that regarding the dissemination of consultation results was achieved very positively. It was underlined the efforts to present materials in the country's native languages.

COMPONENT 2. REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION

2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance (Criteria 11 – 15, Yellow)

- 11) Assessment and analysis of land use and land use change drivers
- 12) Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/barriers to forest enhancement
- 13) Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities
- 14) Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance
- 15) Implications for forest law and policy.

11. Criterion 11 Assessment and analysis of land use and land use change drivers, in general terms has been positively evaluated by participants, although the Autonomous Nicaraguan Caribbean Coastal Regions University (URACCAN for its Spanish name) has a different opinion and evaluates it poorly. As this is a key issue for the future development of the program, the Nicaragua ENDE REDD + program should be open to the concerns of URACCAN and take them into consideration.
12. The prioritization established in Indicator 12 has been termed as poor or requiring further development. Many participants made it clear that progress of forest legislation is needed. They also expressed concerns about forest policies and the need to push forward forest management.
13. With regard to indicator 13, links between drivers and barriers and ENDE-REDD+ activities, many participants expressed the same concern as in the above indicator, stating that more development is needed. Most participants expressed that there is scarce information on the advances in barrier management and particularly a better understanding of the barriers for the REDD+ activities.
14. Action plans to address natural resources rights, land tenure and governance, are broadly well accepted and unanimously considered to have achieved considerable progress.
15. Regarding implications for forestry law and policies participants feel that although development has been achieved there is not sufficient evidence of the required progress. Expectation were that the country should already have the forestry policies and regulations to facilitate the implementation of incentives, particularly to forest owners.

2b. REDD+ Strategy Options (Criteria 16-18, Yellow)

- 16) Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options
- 17) Feasibility assessment
- 18) Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies

As required by indicator 16, Selection and prioritization of REDD+ strategy options. Although, participants recognized that efforts have been done in order to complete the validation of the main strategic lines, it was felt that there is no detailed prioritization of the measures of each strategic line in the territories nor has the action plan 2018-2022 been completed as yet.

- 16. This indicator shows that the Evaluation viability requires more development. Although, participants considered positive that strategic lines have specific measures, and that attention has been drawn to the impacts of deforestation and forest degradation in the country. However, they feel the need of delivering more in-depth analysis into the topic of social and environmental viability.
- 17. Indicator 18: Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies, the working group in general terms agrees that this indicator requires more development. Participants considered that more analysis of ENDE-REDD+ options and their relation with current development programs and projects on the forest, agricultural and environmental sector is needed.

2c. Implementation Framework (Criteria 19-22, Yellow)

- 19) Adoption and implementation of legislation/regulations
- 20) Guidelines for Implementation
- 21) Benefit sharing mechanism
- 22) National REDD+ registry and system monitoring REDD+ activities

- 18. Regarding the Adoption and implementation of legislation/regulations it was felt in the working group that further developed is still needed despite the few but good progress so far achieved. Some individuals in the working group felt that advances in the country's laws and policies are reasonable, although, laws and/or regulations are not well known in the territories, therefore implementation of laws is low, and therefore more dissemination of the laws and regulations should be encouraged.
- 19. The vast majority of participants estimated that the Guidelines for Implementation require further development, only the Ministry of Family, Community, Cooperative & Associated Economy assigned good progress. There was a generalized opinion that legal arrangements regarding carbon rights and benefits distribution in the territories required further development.
- 20. The Benefit-sharing mechanism needs to be developed further. However, many participants expressed the opinion that more information and discussion is needed regarding the distribution of benefits and the mechanisms to be implemented in the territories to ensure transparency.

21. With regards to the Indicator REDD+ national record keeping and activities of the ENDE-REDD+ follow-up system, was evaluated as considerable progress made. However, participants pointed out the need that record-keeping should include other areas, especially forest owners. It should also be automated and more information regarding the territories should be disseminated.

2d. Social and Environmental Impacts (Criteria 23-25, Green)

- 23) Analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues
 - 24) REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts
 - 25) Environmental and Social Management Framework
22. Regarding the analysis of social and environmental safeguard issues, as with the previous indicator, participants estimated that the social and environmental safeguards has achieved a considerable progress, although, they pointed out that the current design of the Safeguard Information System (SIS) should be disseminated in the territories.
 23. This indicator achieved a full consensus in the fact that full achievement of the goals of the ENDE-REDD+ strategy has been accomplished. However, they also pointed out that this version should be disseminated in the territories, especially in the indigenous communities.
 24. Regarding the Environmental and Social Management frameworks also almost got a full consensus. Considerable progress has been achieved in this indicator. Yet, several participants pointed out that progress needs to be made in analyzing barriers to implementation, especially as concerns measures to overcome barriers, and that more dissemination of this analysis is required in the territories.

COMPONENT 3. REFERENCE EMISSIONS LEVEL/REFERENCE LEVELS (CRITERIA 26-28, YELLOW)

- 26) Demonstration of methodology
 - 27) Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances
 - 28) Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines
25. Participants acknowledged there has been progress with regard to the methodology for building the National Forest Emissions Reference Level (NREF), as well as the opening of the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) table. However, they expressed concerns about the validation analysis of maps and that emission factors have not been completed yet.
 26. This indicator was evaluated in the range from considerable progress to require further progress in the validation and standardization of historical and current maps. It is also necessary to complete the analyses and activities to estimate the final NREF and maintain a technical dialogue through the MRV table.
 27. Among participants it has been unanimously accepted that the Technical viability of the methodological approach and congruency with orientations and guidelines in United Nations Framework on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Climate Change has achieved considerable progress, although it requires further development.

COMPONENT 4. MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR FORESTS AND SAFEGUARDS

4a. National Forest Monitoring System (Criteria 29-31, Yellow)

- 29) Documentation of monitoring approach
- 30) Demonstration of early system implementation
- 31) Institutional arrangements and capacities - Forests

- 28. Documentation of the follow-up approach, according to participants requires further development. It does not suffice that this methodology is aligned with the IPCC guidelines to estimate the amount of carbon sinks from forest conservation and management, or emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, a permanent training and step by step exercise is required, therefore the National Human Development Plan (PNDH) is of a great importance.
- 29. The Demonstration of early system implementation was unanimously evaluated a having achieved good progress but still it requires more development, meaning that further capacity building for monitoring is needed. It is sensible to use the National Inventory of Green House Emissions (INGEI) as a benchmark.
- 30. The Institutional mechanisms and capacities are well evaluated by participants, although not clearly stated in the self-evaluation, considers that further capacity building should take place and that also the coordination mechanisms among the participating institutions should be enhanced.

4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards (Criteria 32-34, Ochre)

- 32) Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues
 - 33) Monitoring, reporting and information sharing
 - 34) Institutional arrangements and capacities – Multiple Benefits and Safeguards
- 31. Participants in this working group evaluated this indicator as requiring further development. However, it is not clear from the R-Package on Nicaragua's own interpretation on which constitutes non-carbon benefits and in addition no clear recognition of the need to monitor governance indicators has been stated
 - 32. Not enough progress has been made regarding the Follow-up, presentation of reports and exchange of information. This evaluation is consistent with the previous indicators in the sense that there are several groups requiring more dissemination and exchange of data among working groups, participants and institutions.
 - 33. In general terms it is felt that the Institutional arrangements and capacities for Multiple Benefits and Safeguards require more development. Most probably here there is an area of concern where more inter-institutional cooperation is required and should be enhanced by the upper levels of national coordination.

4.2 Comments on Nicaragua's readiness progress

The most important and largest threat to the ENDE REDD+ program is the expansion of the agricultural frontier, and this is recognized in the Nicaragua's document. The international demand for agricultural products, together with the expansion of agriculture into forestland is accelerating the advance of the agricultural and cattle-ranching frontier, problems which have been addressed in the Nicaragua program.

1. Highlighted Strengths

- a. The National vision of forest conservation and protection is positive, but it requires more than commitment and participation, it should be enforced legally through legal mechanisms and/or regulatory instrument, among them Forest Management Sustainable Certification Schemes.
- b. Significant legal security over land in indigenous territories, territories titled.
- c. Mechanism for dialogue and consensus established with ENDE-REDD+ stakeholders. The establishment of National Standards for the appropriate management of land and forests could be instrumental.
- d. Organisations of producer's positive attitude to participate in ENDE-REDD+ activities. Sometimes private entrepreneurs are reluctant to participate because they are not assured that their participation will turn against their own interests, this should be managed through the communication and the dialogue working group.
- e. Existence of a study on the causes of deforestation. Deforestation is a complex issue; studies do not suffice to stop it. Active actions should be put in place through the National Forestry legislation and through market mechanisms and regulations, such as the banning of firewood in certain places, providing alternative sources of energy.

2. Highlighted Weaknesses

- a. Weaknesses in the application of the legal framework. Recognized by the working groups.
- b. Limited national coverage for forest monitoring and control in the territories.
- c. Insufficient budget to extend consultation and participation to community level institutional staff and limited technology. Budget constraints are a across the board problem,
- d. Bureaucratic and antiquated processes for forest action.
- e. The private sector needs to be more involved in the ENDE-REDD+ process. This is true and it requires the assurance that their rights will be respected and that their opinions will not be overwhelmed.

3. Opportunities

- a. Local initiatives that strengthen ENDE-REDD+ in the Caribbean Coast regions.
 - b. The involvement of livestock farmers to develop silvopastoral systems and natural regeneration of the forests. This program requires a lot of regulation, because of the temptation of making short terms gains rather than long-term forestry returns.
 - c. There are public/private partnerships for ENDE-REDD+.
 - d. The ENDE-REDD strategy is an opportunity to manage resources in other ways and not just from one source.
4. Threats
- a. Extreme events such as fires, droughts and hurricanes.
 - b. Cooperative coordination with different sectors of the political and private spheres has not been achieved.
 - c. Conflicts between the settlers and landowners.
 - d. Change of national, regional and GTI authorities, not committed to the forests.
 - e. Lack of resources to implement their own land clearances and territorial ordering in the indigenous

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The government has had an unquestionable and active participation in the ENDE – REDD+ process, therefore the R-Package Report is an expression of that successful and positive government attitude.

- a. The Readiness Process has enabled the Nicaraguan society to mature. Previous international cooperation was not successful due to several constraints originated in the way in which Nicaraguans view their development, which clashed with the ideas brought from abroad. The progress in terms of organisation, getting together, discussing among several sectorial institutions, has led to critical analysis, vision and future plans.
- b. The inclusion of the ENDE-REDD+ Program in the national policy on forests and climate change is by its self a very important achievement.
- c. The REDD+ readiness process is the result of a participatory process that has included stakeholders from the Caribbean Coast regions, PCN and central level, which is why this document shows REDD+ readiness progress at national level.
- d. Four important milestones of the readiness process achieved to date should be noted: the ER-PIN was endorsed in 2015; the *“Letter of Intent for the Readiness of a Programme focused on the Reduction of Emissions by Deforestation and Environmental Degradation”* was signed in January 2016; the Mid-Term Report (MTR) was presented in August 2016; and PC approval was obtained for the request for additional funds to complete the readiness process.
- e. The Self-evaluation of the readiness process was carried out in a noticeable participatory manner, proving that Nicaraguans can achieve better levels of agreement regarding Deforestation and Land degradation, and the ways to deal with that.
- f. According to the scoring results from the participants in the five working groups: of the 34 progress indicators, 1 was below 20% compliance, 4 were between 21% and 50% meaning that they need more development; 24 were scored between 51% and 80% well advanced but need more development, and 5 showing considerable progress.
- g. After the process among Nicaraguans there is a better understanding of the scope and challenges of REDD+ in the indigenous territories, and among the authorities of the GTIs and the autonomous regions. During the REDD+ readiness process organisational and institutional structures have strengthened, both on the Caribbean Coast and in the Pacific Central and Northern Region.
- h. One unquestionable inference is that the ENDE-REDD+ process has open a country vision up to 2040, and draws a roadmap for the implementation of effective actions at the level of the national territory to reach the defined goals and reduce the rate of deforestation.

6.2 Recommendations

- Reforestation-afforestation, in order to be consistent and sustainable, should be made with a “purpose”. Reforestation for the sake of reforestation itself will not secure the profitability, and therefore the long-term assurance that those resources will, truly be renewable. The purpose is either for the production of non-wood services, such as soil conservation or soil recuperation, water provision or non-wood products, or commercial timber for the production of saw logs, pulp logs or firewood through dendroenergy plantations.
- The cattle ranching, sugar cane and peanuts sectors, have committed to reforestation, although oil palm producers are still pending. Every effort should be put in place to incorporate these entrepreneurs or landowners in the program.
- There is a challenge in the strengthening the inter-sectoral coordination in order to tackle the problems of deforestation and forest degradation, which are rooted in many different sectors, as well as implementing multi-sectoral coordination, which was felt and spoken out at the workshop level.
- Obtain greater participation, cohesion and effectiveness in communication and liaison between public and private agencies interested in supporting the design and implementation of ENDE-REDD+ in the territories.

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